

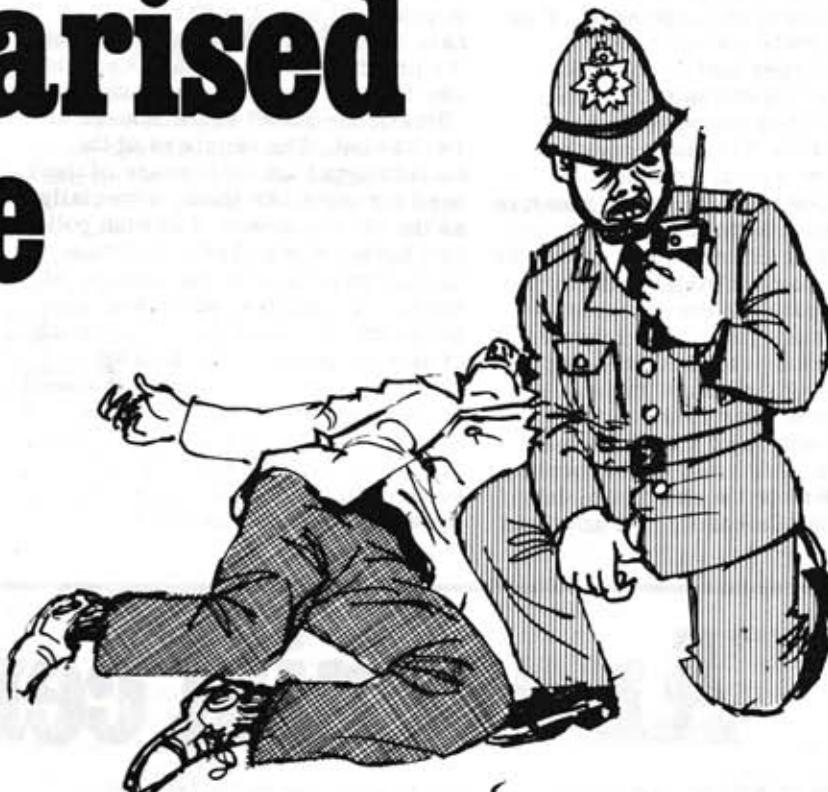
Inside: ANARCHIST CENTRE; ITALIAN ARRESTS; REVIEW: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## Militarised Police

The British state is baring its teeth. Its soft 'liberal' covering is steadily being discarded. This is apparent in many areas, not least the economic. As this produces more unrest the repressive agencies become more pushy.

This shows itself in several ways. Illustrations can be found, for example, in the increasingly open political campaigning of police chiefs. The most obvious are McNee, in London, and Anderton, in Manchester. Less shrill, but no less 'subversive' (in liberal terms) is Alderson, in Devon and Cornwall. All these people protest violently if some naive democrat suggested that they should be answerable to some sort of elected body, after all the police must be above politics, yet feel able to indulge themselves in various lobbyings, whether to obtain changes in the law, to stamp out pornography (and pornographers, - "garbage in the sea of life"-gays and deviants of all kinds) or, for that matter, to sell tyres. Along with this politicisation the police have undergone increasing militarisation. And conversely, the military are being prepared for a policing role.

The best example of all this is, of course, in Northern Ireland. Now, with the experience gathered there we have seen two recent examples in London. The first happened a year ago, the public whitewash is just proceeding. The second happened as we went to press with the last issue.



*'THANK GOD IT STILL WORKS!'*

(A pathologist at the Blair Peach inquest suggests that he could have been killed by a blow from a police radio)

There are a number of popular myths in this country. Well, they are popular with the media, and the suburban middle class. One of these is the nature of the police. This image has been severely dented in the last decade with the exposure of the levels of corruption amongst detectives. Another aspect is, supposedly, the attitude of the police to demonstrations. It is held (at least in the media etc) that this is tolerant, though the officers have been forced to be tougher of late. I'm not convinced that they were ever that tolerant, I remember Grosvenor Square and the like. However, I do accept, along with the media etc, that they have got tougher. As part of this, they now include a mobile paramilitary reserve, on the

continental pattern. In this country it is known as the Special Patrol Group. (This interpretation is not accepted by the police themselves.) Many of us have met the SPG, whether acting as shock troops on demonstrations, "saturation policing" Brixton, or whatever. Last April members of the SPG clubbed to death Blair Peach on an anti-National Front demonstration in Southall. (This is still not the official opinion.) It has taken all this time to get an open enquiry.

As is so often the case at these affairs it is difficult not to adopt an attitude of 'I told you so'. It may be that the inquest will manage to bring in some kind of whitewash verdict. What it cannot erase is the public

exposure of the nature of the SPG. By their own testimony they have revealed themselves to be an élite, detached group... In their lockers have been found a range of vicious weapons, - pick-axe handles, knives, whips and assorted clubs and coshes. "Implements" as their inspector described them. So accepted is this kind of thing that it was customary to burn "crime squad" into the axe handles. Their testimony tends to be contradictory, yet these are the trained and experienced officers whom the magistrates could believe implicitly in the court cases arising out of the Southall demo. However, the good name of the British police is not to be besmirched. It emerges that Blair Peach brought it all on himself. His skull was thinner than average. Several members of the SPG have been suspended or transferred since Southall. One of these denies rumours that he spent a holiday in Greece boasting about killing Peach.

The other armed might that can be called on to protect law and order is, of course, the Special Air Service. These make no pretence about their lethal capabilities. In fact, they, or their masters, play these up for their deterrent value. Very useful they are too. After all, as the press let us know after the end of the siege at the Iranian Embassy, through their

skills we (the British people that is) have just won World War Three. In these times of public expenditure restrictions it is reassuring to discover that the military machine can come up with something capable of coping with half a dozen inexperienced gunmen. Better than this, we (that is the British people) have a unit to be proud of. So good that they could act as advisors to our West German allies in their action at Mogadishu. And they even offered to do the Tehran job, but you know how impulsive the Americans can be.

It is fashionable to shout "Disband the SPG". As the SAS were, at least in practical terms, effective, they have not been included this time but the principle is the same. Demands like this are as realistic as shouting "Smash the State" at the Houses of Parliament. The members of the establishment are well aware of their need for units like these, especially as the old consensus of British politics breaks down. They need them for confrontations in the streets, at workplace disputes, at nuclear installations. It would still be too much of an eye-opener to the average British person if the army were used on the streets in mainland Britain; of course what goes on across the Irish Sea is not noticeable. Hence the value of the SPG. But remember that the army was used in Scotland

during the dustmen's strike and that they were ready to be used in England only last winter.

Another danger of these heady slogans is that they obscure the nature of the 'ordinary' police. For years these have relied on "the British Police Advantage" for their acceptance by 'ordinary' people. As commented above this was more of a fantasy for the middle class than a complete reality but it did have some basis in fact. Concentration on the more lurid habits of the SPG (or SAS in a police role) veils the fact that after all they are only being police. (It also enables the liberal mind to be shocked when it seems that some of the Iranian hostage takers were shot after they had surrendered. Hell's teeth, if you were a highly trained professional killer, blasted on adrenalin, facing an uncertain enemy, in a hazy smoke-filled room, what would you do?)

All States need force - and this means that they need a police force. This has one simple function, to keep people in order. And it doesn't matter if it's called Special Patrol Group, Special Air Service, Special Branch or B Special. Its gentler divisions may help old people across the road. But its speciality is control.  
D.P.

## Anarchist centre

The idea of setting up a centre in London where anarchists and libertarians can meet socially as well as politically to further anarchist ideas has met with great interest, since last reported in Freedom (March 15). Several hundred pounds in donation and subscriptions have already been raised and several thousands are on their way from the proceeds of the joint single released last week by Crass and Poison Girls. 20,000 copies of the single have already been snapped up in 5 days and a further pressing of 20,000 is underway. "Crass" and "Poison Girls" are to be congratulated on their efforts in producing a single whose message is explicitly anarchist. The cover (which opens out to reveal the Queen, Pope, the Statue of Liberty and Margaret Thatcher dressed as young punks) makes interesting reading: in addition to mentioning that the proceeds of the record

are to go to the anarchist centre, the background to the Person Unknown trial is given. "Poison Girls" contribution aptly entitled 'Persons Unknown' makes the connection: "We are all Unknown Persons, not only to the authorities, but to each other." Also: "Isolated and separated it is easier for the authorities to pick each of us off and turn us against each other." The tune struck me as mo notonous, but the lyrics more than compensate. Crass's contribution on the other side "Bloody Revolutions" is musically more varied (if you like punk rock), making the simple, direct statement: "Government is government and government is force, left or right, or right or left, it takes the same old course" finishing with "nothing is really different, 'cos all governments the same, they can call it freedom but slavery is the game, there is nothing that you offer, but

a dream of last year's hero, the truth of revolution, brother....is year zero." Exactly.

The thought of it reaching no 1 in the charts is intriguing..... I wonder how 'Top of the Pops' would handle that.

Meanwhile the search of suitable premises for the centre, (which it has been suggested might be called the "Autonomy Club") continues and a sympathetic architect has offered to make surveys to ensure that the building complies with building regulation and safety standards. If anyone knows of potentially suitable premises, perhaps he/she could write to Anarchist Centre c/o 84b Whitechapel High St., London. And if you want to help in setting up the anarchist centre come along to the next meeting on Thurs. 19th June 7.30pm at Conway Hall.

# Italian anarchists arrested

Amongst the general repressive action that has been taking place here for a long time, the last few weeks have seen roundups of many militant libertarians, resulting in their arrest. The worst of these took place between the 23rd and the 26th of March when 19 people in Sicily and in Emilia-Romagna were arrested: 7 were later released, while 12 are still in jail accused of subversive conspiracy and other serious charges, for which there are very heavy sentences. The 12 comrades in jail are: Alfredo Maria Bonanno, Carmelina Di Marco, Salvo Marletta, Paolo Ruberto, Patrizia Casamenti, Massimo Gaspari, Franco Lombardi, Riccardo Fabbricat, Sandro Vandini and two British citizens Jean Weir and Kennet McBurgen. Many of them are part of the collective that produces the bimonthly review Anarchismo, founded in Catania in 1975 and later moved to Emilia-Romagna, which concentrated on struggle in prisons, state repression and the armed struggle within Italy and abroad. The Edizioni della Rivista Anarchismo also published tens of pamphlets and booklets, both anarchist 'classics' as well as counter-information and on struggles.

During a national meeting, at which some 150 militants and delegates from anarchist groups were present, held in Bologna on the 28th of March, the entire anarchist movement took up a

position against the anti-anarchist round-up, signing, amongst other things, a document now produced as a poster which has been put up all over the country.

Many other arrests followed in libertarian circles, usually based on the charge of subversive conspiracy and supposed membership of underground clandestine armed groups such as Azione Rivoluzionaria. Among these arrests, the T.V. and the papers covered the one concerning the anarchist lawyer Gabriele Fuga, in Milan. After an 11 hr. search of his legal offices he was arrested on the strength of an accusation of a supposed member of Azione Rivoluzionaria who upon having been arrested had decided to collaborate with the police. In fact, Fuga was being accused of having been too enthusiastic in his defence of his clients, mostly militant anarchists, political prisoners, from other organisations, and members of armed groups. Together with other lawyers, always fewer and fewer, Fuga has carried out important work in these years, of committed and total defence of jailed comrades, besides the actual hearings and trial. Fuga periodically visited all the jails and super-jails, even those on far away islands, so as to gather first hand information from the prisoners with which to denounce the repressive prison system. Not long before Fuga,

two other lawyers (Sergio Spazzali and Edoardo Arnaldi) were arrested. Arnaldi, rather than end up in jail preferred to commit suicide; Spazzali immediately he was arrested named his defence lawyer Fuga. So the arrest of Fuga becomes part of the states attempts at eliminating the right to a defence: hundreds of political prisoners in Italy's jails find themselves without a defending council, exposed more than ever to the whim and caprice of the prisons authorities.

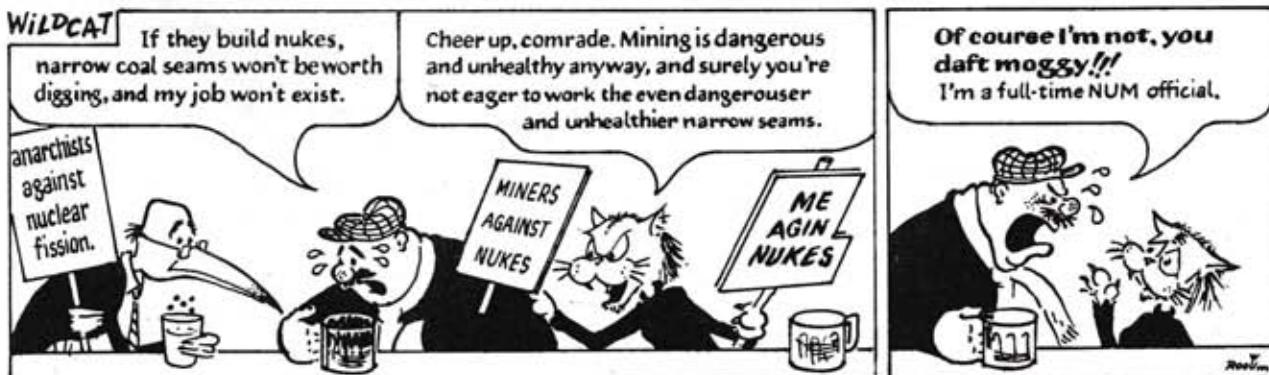
These short notes do not in any way show the complete picture of the repression of the libertarian movement, and even less of the general situation in Italy today. It is a particular difficult time for the anarchist movement and for all the revolutionary groups. The action of the clandestine armed groups (Red Brigades, Front Line, Revolutionary Action) in the context of Italy today brings nothing but a limitation of action, increased repression and most importantly, the alienation of many from the struggle of social revolution.

The situation in Italy is complex and even within the anarchist movement there are different opinions as to what is happening and what should be done. But in regard to taking a strong stand against the states anti-anarchist repression there are no divisions: all the comrades are fighting this.

Translated from an article by the Rivista - A collective.

## MEANWHILE....

Italy's property speculators are about to offer an amnesty for all the crimes and infringements they committed between 1967 and 1977. This comes just before the local and regional elections to be held on June 8 as Italy boasts a veritable army of speculators.



On May 14th millions of workers should have paid heed to the TUC's call for a 'Day of Action'. Despite the various arms of the bourgeoisie whipping it up into an event of massive proportions - strident attacks from the Government, 'representative' polls showing 83% of the general public against it, numerous editorials, attempts at subversion by such right-wing union bosses as rabid anti-communist Chapple (Electricians), calls from Goldsmith of the Institute of Directors for companies to sue the unions etc., one of the main motivating factors of the TUC's militancy has been overlooked, that is, that the call for action is essentially an expression of the huffiness of the TUC leadership at being denied access to 10 Downing Street for collaboration on how best to run industry and secure profits. If the Tories refuse to play the social democratic game (which they obviously do refuse to do) of allowing the TUC to continue its role as an informal part of the State, well then, the TUC will get 'rough' and encourage its members to take to the streets in order to listen to yet more anti-Thatcher rhetoric and calls for import controls, so there. But a look at the recent activities and inactivities of the unions shows that the solidarity shown throughout the land on Wednesday was, in the main, ad hoc.

#### BRITISH LEYLAND

The struggle at British Leyland has, at the time of writing, wound down, giving another victory to Edwardes and co. April started with one major union voting to recommend after the Easter break - the AUEW attracted by the higher offer to the skilled workers - and one major union voting to stay out - the TGWU, whose members, being unskilled, were offered less. This meant that after Easter the AUEW members were flagrantly crossing TGWU picket lines, a reflection of the enmity felt between the respective leaderships of the two unions. However, the TGWU members were soon shepherded back by boss Evans when BL management threatened all strikers with the sack (a tactic which has since been repeated by the British Printing Industries Federation against striking members of the NGA). The Solihull TGWU members cried 'sell out', which is putting it moderately, at the 5% wage 'increase' - in real terms, a cut of 10-15%. And this at a time when BL are boasting about increased sales. Evans, abashed but not ashamed, defended himself by point-

ing out that the agreement he had secured in return for ending the strike allowed shop stewards still to have some say in the speed of the line and trips to the toilet. Strong stuff, Moss. However, the workers at the Coventry Jaguar plants remained unimpressed with this latorial insurgency and stayed out for a further four weeks before, once again, Evans reached agreement with management concerning a panel of enquiry to look at his members' complaints. So Edwardes new 'working practices' are now in full force throughout BL.

#### STEEL

The steel strike is the most concrete example of the shallowness of solidarity at the moment, the support the strikers received being generally deplorable. When it did come it was too late - the Liverpool dockers' strike took place 2½ months after the steel strike started; TGWU instructions to lorry drivers were issued very late in the day; the TUC were spinelessly absent from the struggle, this fact being no doubt related to the visit to Brussels by the TUC Steel Committee in January where they worked out a "planned reduction in manning levels" (TUC minutes 23/1/80) with British Steel Corporation officials. It was only the miners who consistently supported the steel workers, putting in lots of travel to assist in picketing. But it was all to no avail as, on April Fool's Day, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) grabbed the chance they had been looking for for weeks when they accepted the 'impartial' Lever recommendations which, while getting the members 16% instead of BSC's offer of 2%, didn't even consider the loss of 50 000 jobs this year, 20 000 of which have already gone. The resistance to the agreement to go back came from a tiny minority (alas) who occupied ISTC headquarters and tried a physical attack on their 'leaders'. The bomb at the Tory office in Cardiff was linked with unemployed steel workers but the media quickly hushed that one up. Many steel workers gave vent to their accumulated frustration by immediately walking out rather than load blacked lorries but that

# Union blues

was a one day rumble. The strike left the ISTC with £2½ million losses which, according to boss Sirs, will never be recouped. 570 ISTC members were expelled for crossing picket lines during the strike. More recently, Sirs has been angry with Industry Secretary Joseph for ignoring his suggestion as to who should succeed Villiers at BSC. Who did magistrate Sirs nominate? None other than Roy "don't do it in front of the cameras lads" Mason, one-time Vice-Roy of Ulster.

#### AUEW

The Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) continues its rightward shift. Apart from the crossing of picket lines in the BL strike, the AUEW was equally pig-headed during the steel strike. Gavin Laird, the union's rep on the TUC General Council, was demanding a share of the £85,000 which the TUC raised for the continuance of the strike. Such selflessness. More recently, the union's General Secretary, Boyd, was found by an Industrial Tribunal to have unfairly dismissed two of the union's research assistants. He'd found them using the typing pool for the typing of a critique of the leadership on behalf of Bob Wright, currently assistant General Secretary and main opposition candidate to Duffy in this year's presidential elections. Boyd has threatened 'disciplinary action' against Wright. As on the national committee of the union there is now a clear majority of 6 right-wingers and they have immediately voted for a reversal of support for the policy adopted at last year's Labour conference concerning re-selection of M.P.s. and control of the party manifesto. At the same time Duffy is trying to tighten the present loose amalgamation into a single, centralised union. He predicts that this will happen within a few months and if it does he envisages mergers with the boilermakers and electricians to form a 'rival' to the TGWU, which would mean further doses of moderation.

#### TUC

The most annoying piece of union news is the disaffiliation of the Tame-side Trades Council from the TUC. Disaffiliation was used by the TUC

because the Trades Council was preparing a meeting on the theme of "Support the Irish People - Bring the War to Britain". The National Front demonstrated against the proposal and circulated a rumour that the Irish National Liberation Army had been invited to the meeting. The rumour soon spread and, after issuing an ultimatum which called for the Trades Council to dissociate itself from the theme of "Bring the War to Britain" (which was ignored), the TUC let fall the pro-imperialist axe.

But enough of this dreary catalogue of bureaucratic power games. It is more than enough to show that at a time when a workers' movement needs to be firm and uncompromising, even to retain a position of legality in basic actions to further reformist demands - the Employment Bill has passed all its stages - let alone to seriously challenge the politico-economic status quo, the established union movement is wholly unable to do so due to it being tied in with the established power structures of capital and, like them, is cracking at the seams. As the crisis grinds on and on and in the process continues to expose the divisions within the union movement and its leadership's fundamentally contradictory position, it will be fruitful to keep a sharp eye on it as it is a part of the capitalist structure which is nearer to us and therefore easier to subvert, exploit, and, most importantly, use for better ends.

A. Plier.

## not so brief

The Civil Service, which sees itself as the stabilising force in British politics, has discovered that it is 'absolute rubbish to pretend, as some politicians do, that electorates vote for governments to implement their manifestos in full. All governments are elected by a minority and the mass are yearning for something of the centre.' The Civil Service claims to 'minister to this craving,' no doubt in the same honest and unbiased way that judges implement the law, after all are they not from the same class of people, with the same background and political sympathies, do some of them then believe in the right, nay duty, of this aristocracy of bureaucrats to rule and take care of the craving masses.

At the Home Office they have just been sent, for approval, the draft regulations of the Health Services Act, together with a covering note which states that the proposed changes will cause distress to 'ethnic groups'. And well it might as its implementation will end the policy of providing limited health service treatment for foreign visitors to Britain. It is impossible to find any justification for this new piece of racist legislation except maybe in the small-minded tory fear of all that

is not British. One thing is certain, it will not save anyone any money as the DHSS has calculated that this policy change and ensuing charging policy will be twelve times as expensive as continuing with providing this limited policy for free.

Continued overleaf

## FRIENDS OF DOUG WAKEFIELD

Doug Wakefield is currently serving a long term sentence in Long Martin prison. He has been told that he is a danger to himself, prison officers and other inmates." It has also been suggested that the Prison Officers Association has a grudge against him, possibly because of his anarchist leanings. Whatever the reason, we can see no justification for his treatment during the past 6 years.

During the period May 1974 to May 1980, Doug Wakefield has spent only 298 days in normal prison routine, and of these, only 133 were spent on long term prison wings. A further 581 days have been spent in segregation, and the remaining 1 313 days have been spent in total isolation.

In this same period Doug has been moved 20 times around 12 of Her Majesty's Prisons. The latest period of total isolation has now lasted for 335 days and there is no sign of termination. Doug believes that his treatment can get no worse and we agree with him. He is prepared to make it public to anyone who will listen.

Friends of Doug Wakefield is an ad-hoc group who feel Doug's treatment is immoral if not illegal and are prepared to fight and publicise his case by every legal means at our disposal.

So far the Support Group has handed out leaflets outside the Home Office and picketed Long Martin prison with good response. As a result, Kilroy-Silk M.P. has tabled a question in the House, and an Official Visitor has promised to investigate Doug's situation. Meanwhile Doug's plight is unchanged. Anyone wishing to support the campaign, please write to Friends of Doug Wakefield, c/o Warwick University, Coventry.

## TORNESS OCCUPATION

Over 150 people turned up for the occupation over the weekend of May 2nd. On the first night (Friday) attempts were made to pull down some of the fencing. The police were out in force - up to 800 of them with helicopters, dogs, motorbikes, dogs, etc. On Saturday 3rd, after someone had thrown a black object with BOMB written on it in white over the fence, the picket of the front gate was attacked fairly brutally by the police and 27 people were arrested. These people, who are calling themselves "The Torness Parks Department" were all charged with breach of the peace and a few of them with various other things as well. The Park keepers were taken to Edinburgh police station. After a long struggle both inside and outside the station to get the people released and a day of demanding

basic human conditions for those detained (blankets were denied at first), the 27 were released on the Monday morning, after threatening to wreck the cells. On the outside people had been writing graffiti all over the place in support of those arrested, and an attempt was made to smash the electricity board's window.

On their release - a triumph as one of the Park keepers modestly describes it - the 27 returned to the reactor site and held another picket of the main gate. The feeling of solidarity among the occupiers was very high, despite the overwhelming numbers of police. The address of the support group of those arrested is The Torness Public Parks Dept., c/o Box 23, 163 King Street, Aberdeen.

# not so brief (cont.)

Two statements have emanated from chief constable James Anderson in the past fortnight. He believes that the "unusually vicious propaganda ... against the police" requires the force to defend what need not be defended and be defended and answer what did not have to be questioned. On another occasion he told Mrs Mary Whitehouse's National Viewers and Listeners Association that he is the only chief constable to state that righteousness and virtue are the main weapons in his police armoury against crime and public disorder. God's gift to law and order might therefore like to explain recent police action while investigating the arson attacks on second homes in Wales. Where people were held for longer than 48 hours, without being charged, refused contact with solicitors and next of kin, in some cases refused water or subjected to 'high pressure interrogation', had their personal property seized (address books, files, bags etc), were abused and called terrorists, told they were guilty until proved innocent and often threatened by senior officers. This information comes from 52 people, most of whom were arrested between 4.30 am and 6 am on 30 March and none of whom were subsequently charged. Meanwhile the Police Federation are demanding the right of anonymity for police officers who kill in the course of duty. They are worried about publicity given to armed officers who have killed suspects and, too, unarmed officers involved in cases of alleged police brutality.

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"Nuclear safety standards in Britain are continuing to decline", admits the Institution of Professional Civil Servants. There is only one inspector for every two nuclear power stations and the inspectorate no longer has the expertise to assess nuclear pressure vessel failure by fast fracture - the major problem of pressurised water reactors. The inspectorate does not even have an experienced and qualified civil engineer. And then they tell you it is safe.



## ON EGOISM

Freedom,

At a time of major crisis, when capitalism's contradictions are pushing the world closer and closer to the brink, it would seem that what we need to do, according to two recent articles in FREEDOM ('Anarchism and the Proletarian Myth' - S.E. Parker Vol. 41 No. 8 and 'Snuffin to do with me' - E.G.O. Vol. 41 No. 9), is ignore the class struggle (Parker) and, washing our hands Pontius Pilate fashion of all responsibility, withdraw into a self-congratulatory smugness (E.G.O.), and all will be fine and dandy. Using these tactics we become 'self-owning individuals', 'conscious egoisms' struggling for our own self-owning sakes and presumably, the bloodshed, war-mongering, exploitation, hunger and all other known germs 'wither away' at the sight of multitudes of egoisms ego-ing.

These two egoists are clearly under the impression that we are all independent rather than inter-dependent, that the class struggle (the capitalist means of production and accompanying social relations) state terrorism etc. etc. all happen outside of us and bear down on us only as individuals and, therefore, we can only fight back as individuals, only struggle for ourselves. But despite the existence of totalitarian states for over half a century and the development of ever more refined consumer capitalism catering for your very own self in the privacy of your very own home and despite such alienated theories as theirs, we are not totally atomised reification is not complete, solidarity is still alive. The problems confronting us are so big in scope that the struggle against them cannot but be collective. Social problems require a socialist solution.

Such basic facts are lost on S.E. Parker and E.G.O. who seem to be unaware that they cannot even put forth their egoist theories without using the social medium of language. No doubt they are also blind to the fact that the material conditions which made possible such theories were brought about by social action (combined human labour in early capitalism freeing humanity from direct dependence on nature and this relative independence, mediated by increasingly reified social relations of production, appearing in the alienated form of being free of social bonds and so on and so forth).

It is no small piss off that at such a moment in history as this precious time and energy has to be wasted arguing with bourgeois individualists, time and energy which could be better used in many other areas of struggle. It would help if the present editorial collective, whose views are far from self-indulgent egoism if the points outlined in 'A Real Motion of Censure' (FREEDOM Vol. 41 No. 4) are anything to go by, were to be a little more alive to what they want to see propagated in the name of anarchism. At the present rate we'll be seeing articles by that self-confessed 'libertarian' Lord Denning.

A. Plier.

P.S. How can E.G.O. spend, in his/her own words, "every minute of every day" fighting all the miseries s/he lists and yet still spend what is obviously a large "proportion of my time congratulating myself on all the things which are not my responsibility". What magic ingredient is it that s/he puts in his/her tea. Tell us and we'll be saved.

## LAST WORD ON VIOLENCE

Dear Editors,

May I contribute some thoughts to the controversy about violence. They relate to P. Murtagh's 'Why pacifism is morally wrong', FREEDOM Vol. 41 No. 6.

"If you have a gun," Murtagh writes, "and you see a group of thugs attacking another person on the street, you are responsible for coming to that person's aid. In the real world, this one, groups of thugs don't listen to moral

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lectures. They do listen to a weapon pointed their way. You may wish to minimise the use of force. You may merely threaten. Or you may shoot to wound rather than to kill. But, if you refuse to help, if you choose to preserve your moral purity, you are just as responsible for any harm to the victim as any of the thugs."

Against that, I would urge the following points:-

1. Each of us is responsible for everybody, including so-called thugs.

2. To label anybody as a thug is to assert, not merely your moral purity, but your moral superiority.

3. In the real world, this one, violence breeds violence. If you believe it is your god-given right and duty to go around shooting anybody who seems to you to be a thug, you will soon meet another person who has exactly the same idea - and who regards you as a thug. That person may also take shots at your relatives and friends.

4. In an attempt to stop the spreading violence, the most powerful people in your locality will soon set up a state, with a government and a police force, based on the moral principle that violence must be used if necessary to protect people from thugs.

Goodbye to freedom.

5. That state will come into conflict with other states. Result - war, the most appalling calamity. Millions perish. In the end the whole world is blown to blazes.

6. If, therefore, you believe it is your duty to shoot anybody who represents a mortal danger to others, you will have to shoot everybody who shares that belief. You might well start by shooting yourself.

Advocates of violence claim to be realists. Actually, they are living in a world of idiotic theories constructed by themselves for their own self-centred convenience. They claim, sometimes, to be revolutionaries, but actually they are propagating the same old bourgeois attitudes. They always claim to be highly moral, but actually their activities are divisive, destructive, and totally irresponsible. Such people dominate the real world, but are utterly blind to reality.

Well, when the holocaust finally comes - and it seems pretty close now - at least it will put an end to the argument. There will be no immoral pacifist left to say 'I

told you so', and no morally resplendent realist to reply, "but what would you do if you saw thugs attacking another person?" There will be no thugs, and no other persons. There will be only the fruits of ignorance, arrogance and violence.

Yours sincerely,  
Francis Ellingham.

We feel that the current manifestation of the pacifism/violence debate has had sufficient exercise for the moment. See next year for continuation.

## IN DEFENCE OF ANARCHISM

Dear Freedom,

We were enraged to read yet another downer on Anarchism, by Martin Spence, namely his letter to K. Ronstadt (Freedom, April 26th).

As far as we are concerned the 'emerging political style' is that of Spence and non-anarchist friends - an attempt to bring together the passive fragments of the disillusioned left, a 'libertarian current', characterized by a need to be seen as respectable and overreacting against any disruption by others which is plainly 'not cricket'.

For instance, Spence says that the disruption of the debate and the scuffles on the Cuts march was 'a real gift to the bourgeois media'. Since when have Anarchists been tailoring their political action so as to get respectable coverage in the national papers. Seeing as many dastardly deeds are put down as the work of anarchists we would suggest that this is a lost battle anyway. Our energies should be spent in devising and maintaining our own forms of communication.

Angry people, for whatever reason, unlike his cultured socialist friends he's so worried we'll offend, are disruptive..... they chant, they block roads, they walk miles in demonstrations, they picket, they occupy .... what they don't do is sit around most of the time talking cosy politics and calling themselves the vanguard of the revolution. We also object to the definition that H. Block is a 'real struggle' and the disruption of the 'Debate' (an attack on Labour and support for the H. Block hecklers) as not.

For the record, Anarchists have been involved for ten years here now in broad fronts on the

left from strikes and womens issues to internment and political status. We certainly don't think 'horror of horrors, I spy a Trot', but we do bear in mind that the groups we are working with are ultimately out to seize power. A view which probably sounds distant in Newcastle or London but is part of the reality of life here particularly with regard to Sinn Fein, many of whose members, especially in rural areas, are not even socialists. As Anarchists we have to counter this as best we can through propaganda, pushing ideas at meetings and by showing in the way we operate that a society can work on the basis of co-operation, mutual aid and horizontal organisation.

Anarchists here are involved in all the movements he mentioned, as Anarchists, in rank and file groups in the trade unions, the womens movement, and they are heavily involved in the anti-nuclear movement, particularly the anti-uranium campaign going on in Donegal. Anarchists haven't 'frightened off' the local people .. it is the latter who are physically preventing the drilling: and sabotaging the machinery and offices of Irish Base Metals.. (And it was these same Anarchists who were amongst the group criticised by Martin Spence at Torness in 1979)

Like Spence, we were not at the 'Debacle of the Decade' and can't say whether it would have been more profitable to give out the ritual leaflets and remain seated, although the latter would not have given rise to such discussion. The concept of such a debate sounds a bit contrived to us and if fellow Anarchists thought that the co-ordinating committee was mystifying and manipulating, they had every right to heckle.

Of course, we want an Anarchist movement. As Spence says himself 'what lies behind all this is a whole political vision'. We want everybody to become an Anarchist and share in that vision. Sure there are differences, in all political groupings, its not a peculiarity of Anarchism, but that does not dilute the essential message or make us reluctant to call ourselves Anarchists. The sooner those who threaten 'I am ceasing to identify myself as an anarchist', do so, the better.

In defence of Anarchism,

# FREEDOM CONTACTS

## INLAND

ABERDEEN Libertarian Group c/o 163 King Street, Aberdeen  
ABERYSTWYTH. David Fletcher, 59 Cambrian St., Aberystwyth  
BELFAST Anarchist Collective, Just Books, 7 Winetavern St., Belfast 1.  
BIRMINGHAM anarchists/anarch-feminists meet Sundays. Contact Alison at Peace Centre, 18 Moore St., Ringway, Birmingham 4 (tel. 021 643 0996)  
BRIGHTON Libertarian Socialist group, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, Univ. of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton.  
BRISTOL. City: 4 British Road, Bristol BS3 3BW.  
Students: Libertarian Society, Students Union, Queen's Road, Bristol  
CAMBRIDGE anarchists, Box A, 41 Fitzroy St. Cambridge  
CANTERBURY Alternative Research group, Wally Barnes, Eliot College, University of Kent, Canterbury  
CARDIFF write c/o One-O-Eight Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Road.  
COVENTRY. John England, Students Union, Univ. of Warwick, Coventry.  
DERBY. New address awaited  
DUBLIN. A.B.C. Collective, 7 Ballsbridge Ave., Dublin, Eire.  
EAST ANGLIAN Libertarians, Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex.  
EXETER anarchist collective c/o Community Assn., Devonshire House, Stocker Rd., Exeter.  
GLASGOW anarchist group. John Cooper, 34 Raithburn Avenue, Castlemilk, Glasgow G45  
HASTINGS anarchist group c/o Solstice, 127 Bohemia Rd., St. Leonards on Sea, Sussex (tel. 0424 429537)  
HULL Libertarian Collective, 23 Auckland Ave., Hull, West Humberside.  
KEELE anarchist group, c/o Students Union, The University, Keele, Staffs. Weekly discussion meetings every Tuesday at 8pm in the Students Union  
NON-STUDENTS MOST WELCOME.  
LAMPETER anarchist group c/o Adrian James, S.D.U.C., Lampeter, Dyfed SA48 7ED, Wales.  
LEAMINGTON & WARWICK, c/o 42 Bath St., Leamington Spa.  
LEEDS. Dave Brown, 30 Park Row, Knaresborough (near Harrogate) N. Yorkshire.  
LEICESTER. Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross St. (tel. Leic. 21896) and Libertarian Education, 6 Beaconsfield Rd. (tel. Leic. 552085).  
LONDON  
Anarchist Feminists, Box 33, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, Islington, N.1.  
Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor Ave., N.5. (tel. 359 4794 before 7 pm)

Freedom Press  
IN ANGEL ALLEY  
84B WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST.  
LONDON E.1

Freedom Collective, 84B Whitechapel High St. (Angel Alley) E.1. (tel. 247 9249).  
Hackney anarchists: Contact Dave on 249 7042.  
Kingston anarchists, 13 Denmark Rd., Kingston-upon-Thames (tel. 549 2564).  
London Workers' Group, Box W, 182 Upper St., N.1. (249 7042), meets Tuesdays 8pm at Metropolitan pub, 75 Farringdon Rd. Love V. Power, Box 779, Peace News London Office, 5 Caledonian Road, N.1.  
West London anarchists, 7 Pennard Road, W.12.  
MALVERN & WORCESTER area. Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storrige, Malvern, Worcs.  
NORWICH anarchists, c/o Free-wheel Community Books, 56 St. Benedicts St., Norwich  
NOTTINGHAM, c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St. (tel. 582506) or 15 Scotholme Av., Hyson Green (tel. 708302)  
OLDHAM. Nigel Broadbent, 14 Westminster Rd., Failsworth, Manchester  
OXFORD anarchist group c/o Danny Simpson, Exeter College. Anarchist Workers group ditto. Anarcho-Feminists c/o Teresa Thornhill, 34 Divinity Road. Solidarity c/o 34 Cowley Rd.  
PAISLEY (College) anarchist group, c/o Students Union, Hunter St., Paisley, Renfrewshire  
READING anarchists c/o Ms. Shevek, Clubs Office, Student Union, Whiteknights, Reading.  
RHONDDA & Midglamorgan. Henning Adnerson, 'Smiths Arms', Treherbert, Midglamorgan, Wales  
SHEFFIELD anarchists c/o 4 Havelock Square, Sheffield S10 2FQ.  
Libertarian Society: P.O. Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE  
SWANSEA. Don Williams, 24 Derlwyn, Dunvant, Swansea  
SWINDON area. Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon  
WESTON-super-Mare, Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Milton Road.

## NATIONAL

MIDLANDS Federation Secretariat c/o Coventry Group  
NORTH EAST Anarchist Federation. Secretariat: HLC 23 Auckland Avenue, Hull  
THAMES VALLEY Anarchist Federation - contact Oxford or Reading group.  
DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT sec. c/o Box 20 164/166 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BN

SOLIDARITY libertarian communist organisation (publ. 'Solidarity for Social Revolution') c/o 123 Lathom Rd., London E.6. Groups & members in many towns

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST Association of class struggle anarchists (publ. 'Bread and Roses'), Box 2, 136 Kingsland High St., London E.8.

POSTAL WORKERS Network, write Box PW, 182 Upper St., Islington, London N.1.

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNIST GROUP publish quarterly mag. "Libertarian Communist". LCG c/o 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC 1

LONDON ANARCHIST FEMINISTS Basement Office Rising Free 182 Upper St. London N1 (01-359 3785) Staffed Mondays and Wednesdays. 10am-6pm. Come and visit or write c/o Box 33 Rising Free

## MEETINGS

LONDON WORKERS GROUP. Public Meeting. Tuesday 27th. May 8pm. Metropolitan pub 95, Farringdon Rd. London EC 1 (2 mins from Farringdon tube)

"Unemployment-Rights or Riots" "The Threat of Nuclear War-ways to mobilise against it. No War but the Class War"

Libertarian Communist Group public meeting. & 7.30 pm. Wed. May 28 Metropolitan Tavern, Farringdon Rd. ANARCHA UNITED MYSTICS meet every Thursday from 8pm at the Half Way House pub opposite Camden Town Tube station.

NOTTINGHAM  
JUNE 1st. Sunday pm. NOTTINGHAM ANARCHIST PICNIC to Lambley Dumble. Ring 582506 (day) or 708302 (evening) for details of transport etc. JUNE 5th. Thursday 8.00 Public Meeting at the International Community Centre Mansfield Road, Nottm. "Security and the State" (organised by Mutual Aid)

JUNE 7th. Saturday 9-1. Anti-Recruitment picket outside army careers office, Victoria Centre, Nottm.

JULY 3rd. Thursday 8.00 Mutual Aid public meeting on "Working Collectively" at Int. Comm. Centre.

DAM thanks everybody who donated money for Chileans. So far this has raised £52. Further donations welcomed. c/o DAM Manchester

REVIEW SECTION ON  
**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**,  
We thank Pat Cohen and Win Smith for their material for the entire Review Section.

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



## Introduction

IT SEE MS ironic that 'archaic' beliefs about women who experience battery or rape and the men who inflict such injury still exist in our society. Typical attitudes about such women include 'she asked for it' or 'women enjoy getting beaten up and nag husbands until they do so' while the stereotyped, sometimes idealised, macho trait of demonstrating sexual 'superiority' through aggressive behaviour and actual physical violence is largely accepted. Similarly, definitions of what constitutes rape often depend on whether the women appeared willing to the rapist at the time. On the one hand



Rape Crisis Centre statistics

From 'Sleepless Nights' by Helmut Newton

Additions by Casperwork.

women are told not to resist in case the rapist kills them, while in court it is assumed that if they didn't resist they must have consented.

The problems of identifying and dealing with violence against women have only recently been recognised after years of persistent campaigning and largely unaided work by groups such as the National Women's Aid Federation and Women Against Rape. Successive governments have been reluctant to establish research into the causes of such violence which might hopefully raise some suggestions as to how it might be prevented. This is hardly surprising as no government would want to be shown up as knowing about such horrific problems and not doing anything about them; if they were pushed to take any substantial action it would mean spending money they'd sooner use to increase defence or 'law and order' for example.

Sociologists, psychologists and related others who have conducted some form of research into male violence have come up with a diverse collection of findings which render each other useless. These also tend to receive two-way criticism. On the one hand they do not meet the requirements of a 'scientifically valid' study and on the other they are seen as irrelevant to what really happens to the many women (about 500,000 in Great Britain (1) who have at some time, if not regularly, suffered from male violence.

The response from the agencies a woman would automatically turn to for help is far from encouraging. Psychiatric institutions are hardly suitable for either party (except where the man is actually a psychopath); hospital staff and GPs tend to steer clear of marital disputes - violent or not - even if it means they may be acting against their Hippocratic oath. The social services cling to family unity at any cost. The police will never intervene in 'domestic disputes' and how many women decide not to report rape because of the degrading interrogation they will be put through by the police and courts?

These attitudes together have resulted in stereotyping and over-generalisation of many different women, lumping them into one 'problem group'. Political explanations offered to date of male violence (if and when they can be seen to exist) and particularly many feminists' perspectives, I feel, fall short of an adequate social and political interpretation of the kind of violence, both physical and mental, experienced by women and the circumstances in which this occurs. Using specific social

spheres these articles attempt to show how the structure and demands of authority and power in hierarchical society lead to the attitudes and expectations, previously stated, which segregate men and women into dominant and subordinate roles which constantly conflict (although ideally they are meant to be complementary!) In such power systems as capitalism, for example, the status quo depends on men behaving in one way and women in another. The overall subordination of the majority of men encourages the pursuit of alternative ways of achieving dominance (usually over women) and high status and prestige amongst their peers. Thus behaviours demonstrating virility, physical prowess and other typically 'ultra masculine' attributes are concentrated on and directed towards the resort of inflicting some form of physical violence on men's only remaining social inferiors - wives, sometimes children, ex girlfriends or any unfortunate woman who happens to be around at the time.

Whether or not this behaviour forms a 'cycle of violence' (i.e. passed on from father to son and so on) and whether men are consciously aware of their motives being determined by the pressures of some dominant ideology in society, is debatable. Yet it is clear that considering this problem of male violence under the sole heading of 'women's oppression' is insufficient. What is needed is substantial realisation that both men and women together are denied their positive individual potential whilst subjugated within the authoritarian, hierarchical society we know so well.

Should any feminist readers feel that so far I have been too lenient towards men who have raped or battered women, I do not claim for one moment that I would calmly forgive any man who attacked me, assuring him that I understand his uncontrollable political motives. Obviously the awareness of men (or their conscience?) of their position in the political system is necessary so that all people realise that widespread social and political domination is detrimental to women and men alike. Until this is achieved and put into constructive, direct action it is somewhat unfair to expect many feminists and victims of male violence to do anything but blame men and the lack of support from the state powers.

Meanwhile support must be gained for groups who work hard in order to look after women who have to leave home because their husbands treat them so badly and women who have been affected due to rapists and other attackers, e.g. National Women's Aid Federation, Rape Crisis Centres, self-help groups and Reclaim the Night. We hope that the anarchist approach will complement this as the only way prevention of violence against women can occur.

## War crimes

The phrase 'war crimes' is unusual and disturbing. In the first place it seems to imply that war is not a crime in itself, when it is really the worst crime committed by governments against their people. More relevant to this article is the hidden meaning that the moral values of war are seen, by those who fight them to be different from the moral values of peace, so that a 'war crime' is different from any other crime (to those who fight wars). In peace time (if such a thing exists in this society) the criminal can be isolated, explained away and then used as a scapegoat for society's hidden guilt. In war it is often the people we are told to respect who are killing, raping, torturing and mutilating. To explain this, the state invents the 'war crime', trying to make it look like a dispute between two heads of staff instead of an act of aggression against civilians in general and women in particular.

It is not surprising that rape and other acts of violence against women happen in war. After all, when you have bombed villages into rubble, sprayed napalm on everything and everyone, tortured prisoners and killed more people than you can count, why stop at rape? What is surprising is the frequency with which rape happens in war. We're not talking about the odd professional psychopath, but of whole regiments of conscripted soldiers, that is, a fair cross-section of the adult male population. Probably most of these men would not think of committing rape at home, but as soon as they are dressed up in uniforms and sent off to a foreign country they come to see women's bodies as fit to be abused in any way they like. Here is a typical example from the Vietnam war:

"Me and one of the buck sergeants and two other guys took these four chicks in the elephant grass. We balled these chicks. They were forcibly willing - they'd rather do that than get shot. Then one of the girls yelled some derogatory thing at the guy who'd balled her ... He just reached down for his weapon and blew her away. Well, right away the three other guys, including myself, picked up our weapons and blew away the other three chicks. Just like that ... Me and this other guy ... we talked a lot about why we did it. The thing we couldn't understand was that when this other guy shot the first chick, we picked up our weapons without giving it a second thought and fired up the rest". (2)

Whether or not you choose to read significance into the combination of the penis and the gun it is clear that the rape and the murder are similar acts of conquest and humiliation. Sometimes the two are combined in sexual mutilation:

"I saw a case where a woman was shot by a sniper ... When we got up to her she was asking for water. And the lieutenant said to kill her. So he ripped off her clothes, they stabbed her in both breasts, they spread her eagle and shoved an entrenching tool up her vagina, and she was still asking for water. And then they took that out and they used a tree limb and then she was shot" (3).

Incidents as horrific as this were probably rare, but rape of some sort was talked about as 'standard operating procedure'. It all points to a massive outburst of hatred released by the conditions and ideology of war - the parallel with Nazi Germany is obvious. This is reinforced by the conformity needed to survive in an army:

"They only do it when there are a lot of guys around. You know, it makes them feel good. They show each other what they can do - 'I can do it' you know. They won't do it by themselves".

"Did you rape too?"

## Once she knows the facts of life, you should plan her marriage.



**But once she knows the facts of marriage  
she will want to plan her own life!**

"Nope".

"Why not?"

"I don't know, I just got a thing. I don't ... Of course it got around the company, you know, well, hah, 'the medic didn't do it'".

"Did anybody report these incidents?"

"No. No-one did. You don't dare. Next time you're out in the field you won't come back - you'll come back in a body bag. What the hell, she's only a dink, a gook, this is what they think" (4).

At best women are only seen as second class human beings; in war they don't count as human at all. It's a routine of racial hatred - shoot the men, rape the women. While you're at it, shoot anyone who doesn't like what you're doing; he's either a queer or a commie.

There are two common ways of explaining the violence done to women in war. One is to say that war reveals the 'natural', 'animal' man who in peace time was simply hidden under the 'veil of civilisation'. This argument rests on a pretty strange idea of nature. Our nearest animals do not rape; many primitive peoples do not rape, but sending masses of brainwashed, brutalised, regimented men into a hostile country with lethal weapons is somehow supposed to be natural! (5) However, it's not enough to just say, "War sure is hell" and leave it at that, which is the other way of looking at it. Rape is not part of a military strategy and the killing of women is not (officially) a military objective, but an end in itself (although this doesn't make other aspects of war any less evil, of course). In war the enemy is whatever you are not. In Vietnam this officially meant Communists, but in practice it meant any Vietnamese and women in particular. From childhood, men are encouraged to think of women as an enemy and even what passes for love often has military overtones. In war the lesson has been learned literally.

## Marriage

"A woman, a dog and a walnut tree,  
The more you beat them, the better they be"

- country proverb

MALE attitudes towards wife beating are similar to those on rape: either it's rare and abnormal or it's common and harmless. It can be either the work of a deviant or the natural reaction of an ordinary man who can't, after all, be expected to be perfect. On a more sophisticated level theories about wife beating are thick on the ground. Most of them try to blame women for getting themselves beaten, and some go as far as to suggest that the women concerned actually enjoy the experience. If this argument were applied to pensioners who get mugged it would be rejected with disgust, but because of the assumptions people have about marriage, and women in general, it often carries weight in the world of pop psychology, and most of the advice to the government comes from this area. Men are assumed to be reasonable creatures, so if they sometimes behave strangely it must therefore be the fault of women!

Assuming that we can leave this piece of academic idiocy behind, we must still explain the fact that is used to support it. Fifty four per cent of married women experience some violence from their husbands - if they don't enjoy it, why do they put up with it? If any other quarter of the population were abused in this way there would be riots in the streets: here the blood is all shed behind closed doors and it is all on one side. Occasionally we hear of a woman who is sent to prison for killing a brutal husband, but these are women of exceptional courage and determination. Often it takes ten or 20 years of sadistic beating before a woman will leave her husband. Often she will put up with it all her life.

The most common reason why married women put up with violence is 'for the children's sake'. The supposed welfare of children is an excellent excuse for discouraging self-det-

ermination in adults, and it is still widely believed that a woman on her own cannot bring up children as well as a married couple, no matter how violent that couple. In fact, men who beat up their wives usually beat up their children as well, along with anyone or anything they see as their property.

Another reason is the belief, mentioned before, that women are to blame for the violence of men, so women who are beaten often think it is because they aren't good enough as wives (in much the same way as rape victims sometimes blame themselves for being 'provocative'). Even if the woman concerned doesn't think in this way it's quite possible that the neighbours will. Quite often they will outwardly ignore all signs of violence, pretending to believe that bruises are caused by falls and screams from children playing. This discourages the battered woman from seeking help, as the following quotation shows:

"I didn't want any of the neighbours to know that he was behaving the way he was. I didn't want anyone around when Ralph was behaving that way ... I didn't even call the police because I was afraid they'd put it in the papers" (6).

This attitude is made worse by the conditioning which teaches women to regard martyrdom as the height of femininity. The more brutal the man the greater the moral reward for remaining faithful to him.

It is well known that the police prefer not to intervene in what they see as 'domestic disputes'. If a husband feels the need to beat his wife, far be it from them to interfere with his actions. Individual policemen may sometimes be sympathetic, but they are paid to uphold the law, and the law is not interested in what a man does with his property. Marriage is an essential support of the State, so the State is unlikely to make laws that would threaten the institution of marriage. Furthermore, the existence of a professional police force makes it more difficult for friends and neighbours to intervene, or even for a woman to defend herself. On the whole the police will be indifferent to the suffering of women. Social workers and other "caring professionals" may wish to do more but they are hampered by the law and their own regulations. Again they are employees of the State and therefore limited in how far they can act against the interests of the State - they are usually told to keep families together at all costs. At best they can offer sympathetic advice, at worst they can nourish false hopes of the marriage improving.

All responsibility for change is placed on the woman, who is not likely to be in a strong enough state to do much without help. The chances are that she will be economically dependent on her husband and will have nowhere to go. It

isn't surprising that in an economy geared to the needs of (some) men it is almost impossible for a single woman with children and no income to find accommodation at short notice (although things have become slightly better since the Homeless Persons Act). The obvious solution is women's refuges, but these too are subject to the rules of the capitalist economy. Refuges are usually set up by women who have very little money, and are funded by trusts with very little money in them or donations from individuals who have very little money. It is therefore impossible to meet the needs of all battered women in this way, although they do provide the best practical solution at the moment.

When a man beats his wife it is not an isolated act of aggression, like someone hitting you in a pub. Even the first act of marital violence is an extension of an inequality of power that already exists. If a man waits for years before beating his wife it is only because he hasn't felt the need to exercise this particular form of power during the time he was "happily married". This doesn't mean that a husband will always have power over his wife - people are too varied for that - but it is part of the accepted myth of marriage.

So, when a woman finds herself being beaten for the first time, it may come as a shock, but it is really only an extreme form of what she accepted at the altar. In marriage a woman gives up what little independence she once had, so that violence on the part of the husband is only seen as overstepping the mark. A revealing example of this reasoning is the fact that a man cannot be legally accused of raping his wife; the excuse made is that when she said "yes" in church she did so for life! In fact much marital violence is overtly sexual - the woman is beaten, stripped and then raped, and genitals are a common target for injury. It must be remembered that this is only an extreme and more violent form of what passes as normal in everyday life.

It is a mistake to look upon marriage as self-sufficient in its violence. It is marriage within society and as a result of social forces which is important, for there is no reason we know of why a man living with a woman should automatically beat her up. Marriage is a power-relationship and it draws strength from other power-relationships. It is of immense value to the State, for it allows violence to be transmitted down the ladder of power to women and children instead of reacting back up it. The less men are able or willing to resist the authority of other men, the more they will seek refuge in their position of power in the family, and will use violence to maintain this position, as the following account shows:



"He's charming socially. He never shouts at anyone; and if anybody was rude to him in the street, he would never say anything back. He can't use anger positively. He shows respect to every social or authoritarian figure; but with me it all came out. He's angry at himself at not being able to be angry at them, so took it out on me." (7)

The relationship between male violence and lack of social prestige will be dealt with later on, what is important here is the way marriage, with the violence that goes with it, is used to support a whole system of grades of power and the most basic ideas about the relationship between men and women in general.

## Race and class

The ideal rape from a journalist's point of view would be a muscular, black labourer brutally attacking a frail, white girl from a respectable background. In this way sympathy for the victim (or secret identification with the attacker) reinforces and is reinforced by class and race prejudice. Although it is difficult to find reliable information on race and class in sexual violence, we can be fairly certain that rapes like this are a tiny minority. "Black man rapes white woman" and "docker rapes duchess" are primarily the fantasies of a class which prefers to see those below it as somehow bestial. This is not to say that such rapes don't exist (all kinds of rape exist) but that the exaggerated attention given to them results from the ideology of race and class.

The problem in interpreting rape figures is that the police and courts are heavily biased against black and lower-class defendants, especially when the victim is white and middle-class. Prison records in the U.S.A. show that not only do black men get stiffer sentences than whites, they get stiffer sentences for raping white women than for raping black women. In the same way, wife-beating is traditionally thought of as a working-class

problem, but the main sources of information until recently have been people concerned solely with the poor (social workers etc.). (8) However, where concrete figures on rape exist, there is an overwhelming trend towards both the attacker and the victim being black and from the lower classes. (9) 76.9% of the rapes recorded by Menachim Amir were black men raping black women, the next largest

type being all-white (16.3%). Furthermore, a black woman is almost twelve times as likely to be raped as a white woman (although we must allow for the possibility that white women may be more reluctant to report rapes).

The figures on class are even more marked - 90% of rapists come from "the lower part of the occupational scale". (10) An uncritical acceptance of these figures can be used to support the conservative opinion that rape is just one of the nastier habits of the lower orders along with vandalism, mugging, alcoholism and so on. Portraying the lower-classes as not having any moral scruples at all is necessary to justify the massive State machinery used to keep them (i.e. us) under control. Anyway, let's assume that the figure is too large to be explained by legal prejudice alone.

The oppression of workers and Blacks is crucial when it comes to looking at the oppression of women. Unfortunately, instead of giving a common base for liberation, these oppressions react against each other, creating racist, Tory women, sexism and racism amongst white male workers and so on. It is common knowledge that people who are forced to be submissive in some situations are likely to try and make up for it by being dominant in others. If you are kicked by those above you it's a lot easier to kick those below you than to kick back. Macho behaviour is a last, desperate attempt to gain self-respect - always at the expense of others. Physical power over women is available to almost all men, no matter how powerless they may be in other respects, so the less social, political and economic power a man has, the more he will be tempted to exercise power over women. Physical injury is just the most extreme form of this.

Bearing this in mind, it is easy to see how a folk-lore of poor, black men raping rich, white women as a way of revenge can develop. (11) This can be used to control both black men ("He looked at a white woman wrong") and white women ("Carry on like that and you'll get raped"). As Susan Brownmiller points out: "Women have been raped by men, most often by gangs of men, for many of the same reasons that blacks were lynched by gangs of whites: as group punishment for being uppity, for getting out of line, for failing to recognise "one's place", for assuming sexual freedoms or for behaviour no more provocative than walking down the wrong road in the wrong part of town and presenting a convenient isolated target for group hatred and rage."



## Towards an anarchist programme

Violence against women has only recently been seen as a large-scale political issue. Before the women's movement took it up around 1970 it was just "something that happens to women" or an interesting puzzle in criminology. Even now there is very little serious discussion outside the women's movement itself. At the mention of rape or battery the average male revolutionary is likely to become ridiculously defensive, acting as though he had some guilty secret to hide, whatever his actual motives may be. Some will prefer to forget about the whole thing, others will spend all their time plumbing the depths of their subconsciousness and fishing up nasty things to depress themselves with. (12) This in turn makes women more suspicious of what they come to see as "male politics", i.e. anything outside the women's movement.

It isn't surprising that most of the important thinking on violence against women has come from radical feminists. Unlike, say, marxism, which can only deal with women's oppression in economic terms, radical feminism has the advantage that it can face things head on. If society is seen as a struggle between men and women, then the violence men do to women is vitally important. Unfortunately, the lack of a broader political outlook can sometimes lead to the sort of sex-stereotyping that feminism tries to combat. The radical feminist is always in danger of being caught in a political trap, for on the one hand she must see men as being potential human beings capable of gentleness and compassion while on the other showing them as violent, aggressive and unconcerned with the suffering of women. Slogans such as "All men benefit from rape" are not only insulting to those who don't, they are a result of attitudes unconsciously absorbed from a sexist society. The weakness of radical feminism is that by seeing sex as all-important it often fails to see issues like rape in a broader social and political context.

However, most of the alternatives that have come up so far have not been much of an improvement. The Left, when it takes any notice at all, usually just waters things down a bit, or adopts a sort of political schizophrenia - you have a parcel of "women's issues" where all the feminists can take themselves off and scream and shout and be as radical as they like without affecting the "major political issues". If this sort of containment doesn't work you try to absorb the women's issues into traditional left-wing politics, providing a suitable marxist (or marxist-style) explanation. Some of the ideas may be alright, but the general purpose seems to be to subordinate feminism rather than to learn from it.

In any political action you need to have some idea of where you want to end up. This may sound pretty obvious, but it is often the opposite of "scientific" or "pragmatic" policies (whether socialist or feminist) which fail to see the wood for the trees. If we want a society without violence we would do well to look at those societies which come closest to this ideal. Probably the best known of these is the mountain Arapesh group of New Guinea, thanks to the work of Margaret Mead. She writes that the Arapesh lack "any conception of male nature that might make rape understandable to them." They "regard both men and women as inherently gentle, responsible and co-operative, able and willing to subordinate the self to the needs of those who are younger and weaker, and to derive a major satisfaction from doing so." (13) In other words, rape can only exist in a society which has rape built into its structure; it can't exist in isolation. The Arapesh have no authoritarian structures which could give rape a meaning. They have no rulers, no economic competition and no difference in prestige between male and female tasks. While it would be silly to hold up the Arapesh as a perfect society, it is plain that they have a lot in common with anarchist communism. This comparison becomes more striking if we look at their only position of authority - the "big man". The Arapesh have always envied the fine ceremonies of their more authoritarian neighbours and probably copied their leadership system for this purpose. The "big man" exists solely to organise ceremonies and festivals but he has

all the characteristics of a tribal leader - pig-headedness, aggression, pomposness and contempt for anyone beneath his rank. During adolescence he (it is always a man) is taken away and taught how to be as unpleasant as possible - "made a man of" in fact! On reaching middle age he retires and thankfully goes back to being a normal "feminine" Arapesh male. The point is that authority and male dominance are nearly always the same thing.

One of the weaknesses of sexual politics is the tendency to see societies as coming in a spectrum from patriarchy to matriarchy. In fact they come in a spectrum from extreme patriarchy to anarchy with a large murky area in between. Most so-called matriarchal societies are nothing of the sort, they are simply societies which have developed strong compensations for patriarchy. It is true that in some societies women use the sexual act as a form of aggression in the same way that men do in our society, but this is usually only to make up for their lack of political power. (14)

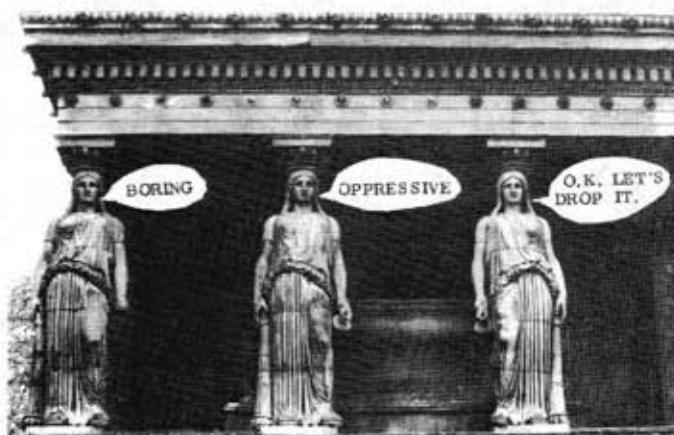
So where does this piece of anthropology leave us. First it gives the lie to statements such as this:

There are points where anarchism and feminism appear to come close, and this seems to result in what is called anarcho- or anarcho-feminism, the confused and inconsistent thinking of those who are sympathetic to both anarchism and "women's lib". But the fact is this; anarchism leads to anarchy, feminism leads to gynarchy.

(Black Flag, December 1979)

The general struggle is against authority. Male dominance is a specific form of authority, and violence against women is a specific form of male dominance. The three cannot be separated. Just as the split between socialist and radical feminism often exists more in theory than in practice practice, the splits between anarchism, feminism and anarcho-feminism are more a matter of emphasis than basic principles.

When dealing with violence against women there are only two major divisions in practice. One concerns attitudes towards men, and revolves around questions like "Is every man a potential rapist." It is often argued that a man opposed to patriarchy is a contradiction in terms, which is unfair to those who have no choice but to do so. On the other hand the number of men who are actively opposed to the violence of their sex is still small, and the contribution they can make is limited. It would be ridiculous to have men answering telephones in rape crisis centres or taking part in Reclaim the Night marches asserting a woman's right to walk at night without male protection! Nevertheless, some men in the U.S.A. have done support work for their local Women Against Rape groups, and organisations like Neighbours Against Rape have tried to bring the whole community into rape prevention. This approach could prove very effective in the long term but it has the danger of being co-opted by moderate elements. Whether



a group needs to organise separately or not is for the women concerned to decide. The more discussion there is between women and men and the more joint action the better, but the prospect for mixed anti-rape groups looks so bleak as to be hardly worth considering - a bit like manager-worker joint strike committees.

The other division is over attitudes towards authority. As pointed out in "An Open Letter to the Anti-Rape Movement" (15) many feminists are tempted to make use of the courts, "establish good relationships with the police" and so on because they do not realise the connection between all forms of authority, or because they see no alternative. Obviously a benevolent authority is better than a hostile one, but this strategy should still be opposed as being ultimately fruitless. This does not mean abandoning the reformists as "bourgeois feminists" but pointing out the contradictions in their approach and proving the effectiveness of direct action. This applies to many more issues than rape.

What is the action open to us at the moment. At present it is small-scale and not very far-reaching in its effects but that is only to be expected. The number and effectiveness of tactics will grow as more people get involved. Here are some of those already tried with some success:

1. Setting up Women's Aid centres as a refuge for battered women and a base for further action.
2. Organising confrontations between the woman and her attacker (not so difficult as it sounds, because most women are attacked by men they know).
3. Providing care and advice for rape victims in Rape Crisis Centres.
4. Publishing the names, addresses and car numbers of men who are violent to women. This has the dual function of letting women know who to stay clear of when they are defenceless and who to confront when they are not.
5. Attacking examples of sadistic pornography (as was done on the Reclaim the Night marches).
6. Women's self-defence classes.
7. Rehabilitation of violent men. This may sound hopelessly optimistic, but it has been tried successfully by at least two groups - Santa Cruz Men Against Rape and a "Men's Aid" group in London. (16)

These tactics point to the formation of a strong opposition to male violence which is anarchist in its methods if not in its theory. However, it is only when we have overthrown all domination that there will be an end to violence against women.



Women occupy the Union Bar at Edinburgh University to prevent a striptease show from taking place.

## Notes

1. Figures from N.W.A.F. 1975/76, so total figure will be much higher.
2. Vietnam deserter: originally in Williams, "The New Exiles", also in Susan Brownmiller, "Against Our Will."
3. Sgt Scott Camil: Vietnam Veterans Against the War, "The Winter Soldier Investigation", also in Brownmiller.
4. George Phillips to Lucy Komisar in "The Machismo Factor", also in Brownmiller.
5. Unfortunately Brownmiller sometimes adopts this first position, saying 'rape in war reveals the male psyche in its boldest form, without the veneer of 'chivalry' or 'civilisation'.'
6. From Gelles: "The Violent Home".
7. From Joy Melville: "Some Violent Families" in "Violence and the Family" ed. J.P. Martin.
8. It is certain that wife-beating happens at all levels of society, but it is as yet impossible to tell whether it happens more in some classes than others.
9. The figures are from the U.S.A., where there is a larger black population than Britain and so more rapes proportionally.
10. Counted as labourers (skilled and unskilled), students, servicemen, pensioners and unemployed.
11. Sometimes this even becomes a conscious principle of black revolutionaries such as Eldridge Cleaver.
12. This doesn't mean that looking at your subconscious is useless, but there are dangers in taking what you find there too literally or in giving it more importance than it deserves.
13. Margaret Mead: "Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies".
14. Most societies held up as examples of matriarchy are actually ruled by men, although women may hold power through the family, religion or the economy. They are often matrifocal (centred on women) or matriilineal (reckoning descent through the female line) but are seldom if ever matriarchal. It is likely that this applied to the Goddess-dominated societies of the past. Where a society has rulers, the majority of them will be men, although the reasons for this are not known for certain. An attempt to prevent male violence by a female coup would be useless, for even if a significant number of women got to the top, they would have to develop a "male" outlook to stay there.
15. A shortened version of this appeared in Freedom Vol. 40 No. 19. The full text is in Peace News 2070 and The Second Wave (Box 344, Cambridge A, Cambridge Massachusetts 02139, U.S.A.).
16. See "Violence and the Family".

## Further reading

Violence and the Social Control of Women by Jaina Hammer is the best attempt to draw general political conclusions from the facts. It is brief, well thought out and easy to follow. It appears in the collection "Power and the State" ed. Gary Littlejohn, Barry Smart, John Wakeford and Nira Yuval-Davies (Published by Croom Helm)

Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, by Susan Brownmiller (Published by Penguin) is the classic feminist text on rape and provided much of the information for these articles. Anarchists may disagree with some of the conclusions, but the presentation of facts is excellent - everyone should read this book.

Patterns in Forceable Rape by Menachim Amir is a good source of figures but the academic style makes it hard to read.

Violence and the Family ed. J.P. Martin is a good introductory collection. The piece by Richard Gelles is particularly good, and his book "The Violent Home" is also worth reading, although most of the points it makes will already be familiar to anarchists and feminists.

The Existing Research into Battered Women (National Women's Aid Federation) is a good criticism of practically everything that has been written on this subject, including Gelles and a lot of the assumptions in this paper!

# BOOKSHOP NOTES

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